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ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL,
LIFT LOCK NO. 8 AND SPILLWAY
(Aux Sable Lift Lock and Locktender's House)
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor
Morris Vicinity
Grundy County
Illinois

HAER No. IL-77

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Aux Sable, Grundy County, Illinois
UTM: 16 E.388670 N. 4583320
Quad: Minooka

Date of Construction: 1846-1848

Designer: William Gooding

Present Owner: State of Illinois

Present Use: Recreational

Significance: The lift lock is one of the fifteen original deep-cut locks designed by William Gooding for the I&M Canal. The locktender's house was built in 1848 when the canal began operations.

Project Information: The Illinois and Michigan Canal was designated a National Heritage Corridor in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER embarked on an extensive inventory and documentation project of the 100 mile-long corridor. Field work for this project was concluded in 1988. Final editing of the documentation was completed in 1992.

Historians: Timothy Whittaker and David Kelliher, 1986.

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William Gooding, the chief engineer of the I & M Canal, designed the I & M Canal lift locks in 1837. Gooding chose a standard design for fifteen, deep-cut lift locks, each with a width of 18' and a length of 110'. The lock cost \$4,500.00 to build. The original timber lock gates had miter sills, hand-operated pivoting valves that permitted water into the lock chamber, and manually operated balance beams. In 1887, a sawmill and stave and barrel factory stood adjacent to the lock. These facilities used waterpower furnished by a spillway that ran along the north side of the lock. Operating under a head of 6'-9", these small mills were provided with about 40 horsepower for the saws and other woodworking equipment. Nothing remains of these mills.

In 1936-37 the Civilian Conservation Corps repaired the lock. In addition to the work on the lock walls, the Civilian Conservation Corps replaced the original wooden lock gates with nearly identical wooden gates. The upstream lock gates were replaced between 1959 and 1964 with immovable reinforced concrete gates, while the downstream set was removed sometime after 1967. The Civilian Conservation Corps-constructed lock gates are lying in the woods several yards north of the lock.

Lift Lock No. 8 is located in Aux Sable Township, Illinois, 53 miles from Bridgeport. This lock originally had a lift of 6.55 feet. The walls are constructed of ashlar limestone, although some of the stones have been replaced with concrete. Some capping stones are held together by iron clamps.

The Locktender's House was built in 1848 when operations commenced on the I&M Canal. The house was used until 1933 when the Joliet-to-LaSalle section of the canal (the last remaining operable part) was closed. The Civilian Conservation Corps repaired the building in 1933-34, and the building was totally remodeled in 1940.

The Locktender's House is a two-story, timber-frame building measuring 25" x 18". The building has a rubble limestone foundation, horizontal clapboard siding with corner boards, and box cornice along the eaves with gable returns. Adjoining the north facade is a concrete-block and wooden addition. The 1940 additions included a flat-roof kitchen to the southwest. The original six-over-six-light, double-hung, sash windows were also replaced by three-over-one-light, sash windows.

SOURCES:

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